

Message Text

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16

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 270450Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1654

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TDC

CINCPAC

S E C R E T TAIPEI 2676

EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

TDC FOR J-22

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ETRN, TW, JA, CH

SUBJECT: THE CIVAIR BREAKS OVERALL ROC FOREIGN POLICY

1. SUMMARY: GIVEN SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF
ROC-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP, CIVAIR BREAK DOES NOT NECESSARILY
MEAN ROC IS NOW IN PERIOD OF RELATIVE FOREIGN POLICY
INFLEXIBILITY. PREMIER CHIANG, WHO HAS BEEN ABLE TO COUNT
ON LDP RIGHT-WING TO WARD OFF JAPANESE RETALIATION,
WOULD RUN VERY SUBSTANTIAL RISKS IF HE ATTEMPTS SIMILAR
ACTION IN SITUATIONS WHERE HE HOLDS FEWER CARDS. WE DO
NOT FORESEE SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN RELATIONS WITH US,
BUT BELIEVE PREMIER WISHES TO MAKE POINT THAT USG CAN-
NOT COUNT ON GROC ACQUIESCENCE IN FURTHER STEPS IN US-PRC
NORMALIZATION PROCESS WHICH IMPINGE ON ROC'S STATUS.

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END SUMMARY.

2. OVER PAST THREE YEARS, ROC HAS SHOWN CONSIDERABLE FLEXIBILITY IN ITS RELATIONS WITH COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE RECOGNIZED PRC, HANGING ON IN CAPITALS ABOUT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE AND ATTEMPTING THEREAFTER TO CARRY ON INFORMAL RELATIONS THROUGH TRADE, CULTURAL OR NEWS OFFICES. AND WHILE HURT, EVEN BITTER ABOUT NEW DIRECTIONS IN US CHINA POLICY SINCE 1971, GROC HAS INDULGED IN FEW RECRIMINATIONS AND INSTEAD HAS WORKED AS BEST IT COULD IN THE GIVEN CONTEXT. DOES UNYIELDING ATTITUDE TAKEN TOWARD JAPAN IN CIVAIR CONTROVERSY INDICATE THAT ROC FOREIGN POLICY NOW IS LIKELY TO BECOME LESS FLEXIBLE?

3. THE ANSWER SEEMS TO BE A QUALIFIED "NO," AND WE EXPECT GROC WILL CONTINUE TO SHOW FLEXIBILITY IN MOST FOREIGN POLICY AREA. THEREIS A UNIQUELY UNFORTUNATE ASPECT TO ROC-JAPAN RELATIONS (POINTED OUT IN TAIPEI 1198), INTENSIFYING GROC SUSPICIONS OF ALL THINGS JAPANESE AND GREATLY IMPEDING COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO. APPARENTLY INESCAPABLE EMOTIONS MEAN THAT GROC REACTS QUITE DIFFERENTLY TO MATTERS INVOLVING JAPAN, AND THAT CONSIDERATIONS OF NATIONAL PRIDE PLAY A MUCH LARGER ROLE IN SETTING POLICY. WHEN IT COMES TO JAPAN, THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS ITSELF "BEFORE THE BAR OF HISTORY"; IN MOST OTHER CASES, IT IS MORE PRACTICAL.

4. ASIDE FROM THIS "ODD COUPLE", RELATIONSHIP, THERE WERE CERTAIN OTHER SPECIAL FACTORS AT WORK IN THE CIVAIR CONTROVERSY, ESPECIALLY THE ATTEMPT BY BOTH PEKING AND TAIPEI TO USE THE ISSUE TO EXERT LEVERAGE ON INTERNAL JAPANESE POLITICS AND THE PARALLEL EFFORT BY LDP POLITICIANS TO COURT FOREIGN SUPPORT OF THEIR OWN ASPIRATIONS. CLEARLY THE GROC WAS SWAYED BY SEIRANKAI ENVOYS SHUTTLEING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN TAIPEI AND TOKYO COUNSELLING MAXIMUM STIFFNESS. IF THE GOJ HAD BEEN FORCED TO BACK DOWN, GROC AND ITS WOULD-BE JAPANESE FRIENDS WOULD HAVE ACHIEVED A STUNNING SUCCESS; EVEN NOW GROC IS STILL COUNTING ON THE LDP RIGHT WING AND BUSINESS PRESSURE GROUPS TO MINIMIZE ANY DAMAGE.

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5. GROC'S ACTION APPEARS AT THE MOMENT TO HAVE POPULAR ACQUIESCENCE AND NO STRONG OPPOSITION. EVEN THOSE WHO FELT TAIPEI'S BEHAVIOR WAS OUT OF KEEPING WITH ITS BARGAINING POWER WERE ANGERED BY THE ACTUAL TEXT OF OHIRA'S REMARKS. IT IS A GENERAL HOPE, BOTH IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT, THAT AFTER A DECENT INTERVAL JAPANESE WILL MAKE A FACE SAVING GESTURE AND AIR LINES WILL AGAIN START FLYING. THIS WOULD BE SEEN AS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT VICTORY

FOR PREMIER.

6. WHILE CCK WAS HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY EMOTION, HIGH STAKES, DUBIOUS ADVISE FROM SEIRANKAI, AND ABSENCE OF ANY STALWART CRITICS WITHIN HIS OWN INNER CIRCLE, DECISIVE FACTOR SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN HIS FEELING THAT HE HAD TO DRAW THE LINE ON MATTERS OF PRINCIPLE TO PREVENT ROC'S NATIONAL IDENTITY FROM BEING WHITTLED AWAY. MOREOVER IN TAKING AN UNYIELDING STAND, HE MUST HAVE BEEN AWARE THAT HE WAS BEGINNING A DANGEROUS GAME. RAISING POLITICAL THRESHOLD FOR GROC ACCEPTANCE OF PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH JAPAN MAY STIFFEN BRITISH, PHILIPPINE, AND MALAYSIAN RESOLVE TO RESIST SIMILAR PRC DEMANDS. BUT IT ALSO RISKS PLAYING INTO PEKING'S HANDS. PREMIERMAY OVERESTIMATE ROC'S REAL BARGAINING POWER AND UNDERESTIMATE NEW STIMULUS FOR PEKING TO INTERJECT POLITICAL CRITERIA INTO PRACTICAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS.

7. WE SUSPECT CCK'S ULTIMATE TARGET MAY HAVE BEEN THE US. CHARGE SENSEDAS MUCH IN HIS RECENT CONVERSATION WITH PREMIER, AND FONMIN HAS ALMOST ARTICULATED TO US HIS FEAR THAT WE WILL BE EMBOLDENED BY TAIWAN'S STABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY TO GRADUALLY DOWNGRADE OUR OFFICIAL PRESENCE IN ROC TO PERMIT DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION OF PRC. THIS IS HARDLY A NEW CONCERN OF GROC; WE HAVE SEEN IT IN PREMIER'S REACTIONS EACH TIME WE HAVE APPROACHED HIM ON REDEPLOYMENTS OR OTHER ADJUSTMENTS. WE DOUBT HIS BEHAVIOR TOWARD JAPAN SIGNALS A LESS COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD US, BUT WE DO BELIEVE HE WISHES TO MAKE THE POINT THAT USG CANNOT COUNT ON GROC ACQUIESCENCE IN FURTHER STEPS IN US-PRC NORMALIZATION PROCESS WHICH IMPINGE ON ROC'S STATUS.

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8. IT IS STRIKING THAT DESPITE THEORETICAL ADHERENCE TO A "ONE CHINA"PRINCIPLE, IN THE CIVAIR CONTROVERSY THE GROC WAS SAYING, IN EFFECT, "WE CANNOT PREVENT YOU FROM TREATING THE CHINESE COMMUNIST REGIME AS A STATE; NEVERTHELESS YOU MUST TREAT US AS A SOVEREIGN STATE AS WELL."
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